**Local Community Fund**

**and**

**Infrastructure**

**& Capacity Building Fund**

Annual Report – Oct19–Sep20

26/11/2020

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# Foreword

Welcome to the first annual report for the Local Community Fund and Infrastructure and Capacity Building Fund.

These programmes began delivery in October 2019 in what became a challenging first 12 months. The organisations funded to deliver these programmes rose to the challenge to support residents over and above their planned activities.

During April to June in particular, organisations supported the borough’s response to Covid-19 through delivering food parcels and medicines, providing online and telephone support through befriending, advice provision and with volunteers.

This willingness to participate and help others demonstrates the community spirit and ‘can do’ attitude that is a credit to Voluntary and Community Sector organisations supported by these schemes.

We recognised that Voluntary and Community Sector organisations had been impacted by the pandemic and it was important that we continued to fund organisations more flexibly through this period. The Mayor confirmed this in the letter on 27 March 2020 sent to funded groups and the Council has signed up to London Funders [“We stand with the sector”](https://londonfunders.org.uk/about/covid-19-0/our-blog/we-stand-sector-funder-response-covid-19) funder response to Covid-19 statement.

Despite the impact there have been clear successes through the first year of the programme highlighted in this report. This annual report demonstrates the range of projects and many of their achievements. Thank you to funded organisation for the photos and quotes.

It has been important to balance the support to residents dealing with Covid with enabling the organisations to deliver the Local Community Fund aims and objectives. The Council will continue to support organisations to strike that balance.

The next 12 months are starting off in an equally challenging environment but the priorities of the programme including digital inclusion, welfare advice provision, employment support and reducing isolation have never been more important.

# Programme Overview

The **Local Community Fund** began implementation 1st October 2019 with 39 organisations awarded funding totalling **£2.67m** per year to deliver 50 projects across five themes.

At the same time the **£260k** per year was awarded from the **Infrastructure & Capacity Building Fund** to Tower Hamlets Voluntary and Community Sector (THVCS) Infrastructure Partnership project to support organisations across the borough.

During the first year of the Local Community Fund programme over 20,000 residents have been supported through the programme from all ages and throughout the borough with delivery through 13 schemes

Theme 1: Scheme A Children, Young People and Families; Scheme B Older People; Scheme C Access, Information and Self-Management; Scheme D Healthy living and healthy choices; Scheme E Improved inclusion, health and well-being outcomes for disabled people and people experiencing mental health issues

Theme 2: Scheme A ICT skills and digital careers; Scheme B Online Safety

Theme 3: Scheme A Advice and Information

Theme 4: Scheme A Developing and embedding good practice in the workplace for people with disabilities, learning difficulties and physical and mental health barriers to work; Scheme B Reducing barriers to employment for disadvantaged groups; Scheme C Support focused on increasing access to art and cultural industries

Theme 5: Scheme A Reduction in the exploitation of children, young people and other vulnerable groups; Scheme B Improving the perception of young people in the community; Scheme C Services for people affected by domestic violence or other unsafe circumstance

# Theme 1 – Inclusion, Health & Wellbeing

Theme 1 incorporates a range of schemes supporting children and families, older people and people with disabilities from across the borough. We fund 28 projects, focusing on improving the health and wellbeing of residents and the quality of the care services they receive. The table below provides a breakdown of this theme.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Scheme** | **Priority** | **Number of Projects** |
| **Scheme 1A** – Children, Young People and Families | Increase access to Youth Services | 8 |
| **Scheme 1A** – Children, Young People and Families | Provision of Early Help support to families | 8 |
| **Scheme 1A** – Children, Young People and Families | Support for young carers | 8 |
| **Scheme 1B** – Older People | Ageing well and reducing social isolation | 7 |
| **Scheme 1B** – Older People | Provision of physical and health-promotion activities for older people | 7 |
| **Scheme 1C** – Access, information and self-management | Residents better informed/equipped to manage health conditions | 2 |
| **Scheme 1D** - Healthy living and healthy choices | Residents better informed to make healthier choices | 6 |
| **Scheme 1D** - Healthy living and healthy choices | Increased engagement in physical activity | 6 |
| **Scheme 1E** – Improved inclusion, health and well-being outcomes for disabled people and people experiencing mental health issues | Improved health outcomes for disabled people | 5 |

Theme one projects made progress in engaging with their service users. Projects had an empowering person-centred approach, making a tangible and positive difference to people’s lives. Providers collaborated with community and statutory agencies to ensure the best outcomes for residents. Funded activities included:

**Impact of Covid-19**

Projects adapted their services; some more quickly as they already had systems in place to do so. Others needed extra resources (laptops / mobile phones) to provide tangible and effective support to residents. Examples of adapted activities:

Socially distanced activities at St Hilda’s



**Impact on adapted activities:**

Some organisations indicated that this period has enabled them to forge a strong alliance with the Council’s Early Help team and Social Services. Resulting in Working with Early Interventions Support Workers to ensure support for the families deemed most in need.

There have been mixed reactions to how online services have worked. Some organisations have taken the opportunity to develop this as an additional resource.

**Feedback from service users during lockdown included:**

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| "we are all here for each other’s wellbeing" | "Isolation is hard and being in the same room helps" | “It’s amazing. Thank you, for not letting me go" |

“Some service users have found this particularly difficult, being in isolation and experiencing ‘screen fatigue’”.

The onset of the coronavirus pandemic part way through the year had a big impact in the borough, on organisations, and on residents. Project resources were, in some cases, diverted to provide Covid response. This included Co-ordinating, food delivery and providing medicine delivery to residents who were shielding, alongside advice and support over the phone.

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| [St Hilda's logo and link to website](http://sthildas.org.uk/) Photo of volunteer delivering food during lock down  Hot meal home deliveries to service users | Photo of bags of food ready to be delivered Photo of pasta dish in delivery potsPhoto of worker filling food containers to go |

## Scheme A – Children Young People & Families

There are 8 projects within this scheme. The focus is to a) increase access to Youth Services, b) provide Early Help support to families, c) support for young carers.

Projects are intended to:

Projects in this scheme progressed well, achieving priorities and outcomes. In this first year, over 600 children and women were supported to explore experiences of self-worth and confidence.

**Outcomes and achievements include:**

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| [Logo Newark Youth London and link to website](https://newark.org.uk/)  **Girls in Action**  8 girls report they can cope better with mental health issues after participating workshops | Photo showing sheet produced by Girls in Action participants - session on depression during lockdown |

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| [Logo to the Yard and link to website](https://theyardtheatre.co.uk/) | [Canaan project logo and link to website](https://thecannonproject.com/about) | 83% of young women report they feel more positive and confident to sort out conflict with family or friends |
| **Tower Hamlets Teens**  18 young people have benefited from in-depth, one-to-one coaching and support. | [Osmani Trust Logo and link to organisations website](http://www.osmanitrust.org/) | Family Mentoring Project supported 30 families |
|  | [Stifford centre logo](https://www.facebook.com/stiffordcentre/) | 38 girls participated in the leisure, health and creative activities of the Young Girl's Project. |

“This year I have come closer to reaching my potential, creating pieces I can actually be proud of, and it’s all thanks to you, ” and “I don’t think I really would have discovered and expressed my creative side if it wasn’t for all of you, so thank you.” - participant

[Look Ahead Logo and link to website
](https://www.lookahead.org.uk/)

Domestic Abuse Children's Worker

42 children supported in the refuge

photo of decorated pots of herbs painted and planted by children in the refuge

198 young people participated in Youth Theatre sessions, 4929 audience members. 88 families took part in Creative Play.

[Logo Half Moon

and link to website](https://www.halfmoon.org.uk/)

“I loved the games we played and everyone is always so nice to me. Thank you everyone I hope to see you in Sept 2020.”

Photo of young people in an online drama class

## Scheme B – Older People

There are 7 projects within this scheme. The focus is to provide a programme of a) ageing well and reducing social isolation, b) physical and health-promotion activities for older people.

In the first year, over 800 beneficiaries were supported to build stronger networks of information sharing and peer-support between users and those not accessing services. Below are some of the achievements of this scheme:

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| [COMMUNITY OF REFUGEES FROM VIETNAM - East London  logo and link to website](http://crveastlondon.co.uk/index.html)  Consultation discussion group on transportation to key services at the Vietnamese and Chinese Lunch and Social Club. | Photo of participants taking part in the consultation |

“I love how St Hilda’s is all about bringing people together no matter your age or backgrounds – for me, this is the very essence of great community.”

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| [Logo, Elop  and link to website](http://elop.org/) | **Tower Hamlets LGBT Support Project**  23 people have developed social connections that they have maintained outside of the group. | [St Hilda's logo and link to website](http://sthildas.org.uk/)  Picture of project name |

**Caxton Hall Activity Centre** led by older people.

Help run the Hub café, proving a warm welcome and healthy snacks, enabling local people to connect with others, young and old, in the community. The cafe was closed due to the lock-down and the project applied actions to support each other. As a result of the project, 225 old older people were supported and report feeling less isolated.

**Friend at Home**

120 volunteers active, with 71 new matches since October 2019

Logo East London Age UK and link to website


‘Being a befriender is more than I anticipated. Our weekly chats are something I look forward to as well as the client looking forward to it. My client is lovely and has lots of funny stories to tell.’

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| [Logo Tower Hamlets Friends and Neighbours and link to website](https://www.thfn.org.uk/) | **Older Peoples Befriending Project**   * 50 older residents visited, report feeling less loneliness through greater contact with other older people * 2 older people were recruited as new volunteers during the lockdown and report making a positive contribution to their communities. | Photo of online meeting on a phone |

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| [Toynbee logo and link to their website](https://www.toynbeehall.org.uk/) | **The Wellbeing Centre at Toynbee Hall**   * 120 people aged 50+ report increased social networks and have maintained these relationships outside project * 80 older people report feeling confident to take control of their health and tackle challenges |

## Scheme C – Access, Information and Self-Management

There are 2 projects within this scheme. The focus is for older residents to be better informed and equipped to manage health conditions.

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| [Logo Globe Community Project  and link to their website](https://www.globecommunityproject.org/) | **Take Back Your Life**, a mindfulness-based pain management programme, addressing chronic pain/illness, related social isolation and inactivity. |

58 people were supported through five pain management courses, alongside additional one to one telephone support during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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|  | “The course was good because I learned so many things…. like how to calm down yourself... your mind” |

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| [A picture containing logo of REAL and link to website](http://www.real.org.uk/) | The "**Taking control of your life**” project delivers support planning support alongside a user-led co-production group harnessing the views of people with lived experience of disability. This project started in April. | Photo of co-production group participant |

## Scheme D – Healthy living and healthy choices

There are 6 projects within this scheme. The focus is for a) Residents to be better informed to make healthier choices, b) Increase engagement in physical activity

The projects in this scheme have progressed in achieving priorities and outcomes. In the first year, 1900 beneficiaries have been supported to make informed choices on keeping fit and healthy. Below are some of the achievements of this scheme.

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| [Logo, London Tigers and link to webiste](http://www.londontigers.org/) | **Exercise for health project**   * 158 women participating report feeling less lonely and isolated * 60% reported feeling more positively connected | Photo of participants exercising |

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| [Logo Mudchute](https://www.mudchute.org/)  Photo of Street art play activity | **Street Art ‘play on our streets’**  Playing out at Mudchute project using Mudchute’s unique natural facilities to provide a range of freely chosen play opportunities in a safe, stimulating environment.  1300 residents participated in a wide range of culture, play, physical activity, leisure and sport inclusive for all |

[](https://www.rsbc.org.uk/) **Live Active, Live Well Tower Hamlets**

“20 Blind and partially sighted children and young people living in Tower Hamlets have improved ability to make healthy life decisions”.

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* 127 children, young people and adults registered on the project.
* The summer programme sports sessions brought families to come together to play and build relationships.

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| Bangladesh Youth Movement Logo | **Live Healthy Enjoy Life**  152 women participated in various health and well-being activities and report they increased ability to care for their health needs and those of their families. |

**Healthy Lifestyle Partnership Programme**

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| [Logo Stifford Centre and link to Facebook page](https://en-gb.facebook.com/stiffordcentre/) | [Logo Stepney City Farm](https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Home.aspx) | [Logo Shadwell Basin](https://www.shadwell-basin.co.uk/) | [Logo Black Women's Health and Family Support](https://www.bwhafs.com/) | [Logo Dorset Community Association](https://dorsetca.org/)  **Dorset Community Association** |

A consortium of local organisations delivering a program of healthy lifestyle activities, classes and opportunities. The partnership supported 401residents, of whom:

## Scheme E - Improved inclusion, health and wellbeing outcomes for disabled people and people experiencing mental health issues

There are 5 projects within this scheme. The focus is for a) Improved health outcomes for disabled people. In the first year, over 340 disabled people and their families have been supported to make informed choices on their wellbeing. Below examples of scheme achievements:

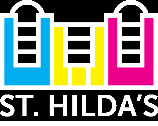
[](http://icmfoundation.org.uk/) **Get Active Newspaper**

* 40 people with learning difficulties attended the initial newspaper launch
* 13 beneficiaries reduce social isolation

[](https://www.deafplus.org/our-locations/tower-hamlets/)

**Improving Health and Wellbeing for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in Tower Hamlets**

61 beneficiaries participated in various activities such as wellbeing workshops.

[](http://sthildas.org.uk/) Photo of participants playing musicPhoto of participant painting a T shirt

[](https://www.workingwelltrust.org/) **Upskill**

10 over 50s accessed volunteer placements including Covid-19 response placements. 6 clients accessed paid work.

‘Being a befriender is more than I anticipated... My client is lovely and has lots of funny stories to tell.’

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| [Logo Women's Trust](https://womanstrust.org.uk/)A picture containing  Empowering Women | **Therapeutic support for women affected by Domestic Abuse**   * 9 out of 15 service users reported reduced stress and anxiety * 10 reported improved confidence and self-esteem and feelings of control over their future |

# Theme 2 – Digital Inclusion & Awareness

We fund five Digital Inclusion & Awareness projects. All Theme 2 projects performed satisfactorily up to the end of March 2020.

Intended outcomes for participants:

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| Increased ability to implement online prevention measures | Children, young people and their families know how to report online bullying and abuse | Older people are aware of how to identify online scams and keep themselves safe |
| Parents have learned how make changes to ensure that their children are safe online | Scanner | All have increased awareness of the potential dangers of online activity |

The Covid-19 lockdown measures had an impact with organisations contributing to the Borough’s Covid-19 response with services paused or adapted from April. Increased use of IT to stay in touch highlights the importance of this theme to enable increased inclusion of older people and safety of children.

## Scheme A: ICT skills and digital careers

Projects deliver sessions that enable older people to be confident in using ICT programmes, going online safely and learning to use social media platforms to communicate and connect with people. We fund 3 projects under this scheme:

" Very patient and helpful approach."

"Thank you for your support today in helping me to learn how to use my device. I really learned a lot from that session."

“I have been able to go online alone, something I didn’t think I could do! … Taking part in this free course has been good for me and something I haven’t been able to do before. I enjoyed the learning with a young volunteer to talk me through what to do. I am now going to study another course online”

[](https://newhamndp.org.uk/)



## Scheme B – Online Safety

The schemes priority is children and young people online safety. Activities raise awareness of potential dangers online among children, young people and supports their parents and carers to implementation of suitable prevention measures.

Projects funded in this scheme are:

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| E-Safety Champions delivered by    **SocietyLinks** | Building Digital Resilience delivered by |



“Mary told the group that she was very happy to have been made aware of how she could protect her children as she hadn’t realised the dangers that are present online”.

# Theme 3 – Advice and Information

Theme 3 funds local advice and information services. A consortium of advice organisations is funded to provide local people advice on welfare benefits, housing, debt, employment rights, immigration issues and other social welfare issues. Within this theme we support the Tower Hamlets Advice Training and Capacity Building Project provide training for volunteers embarking on advice career.

**Scheme Highlights**

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| **Advice Tower Hamlets** – **13** organisations in partnership - **£3,234,357** funding up to March 2023    **£18,578,281** client’s income increased  and / or backdated in the first 12 months    **4,772** clients supported to  increase / maximise incomes in the first 12 months    **19,828** clients assisted with  social welfare advice in the first 12 months | **Tower Hamlets Advice Training and Capacity Building Project** –  **£175,000** funding up to March 2023  **7** volunteers **found paid work** within the first 12 months of the programme  **£2,901,815** debt reduction/write offs resulting in reduction in amounts of personal debt | **St Peters Bengali**  **Association** |
| **19** Learning to Advise **certificates** were **awarded** (11 to volunteers and 8 for staff) | **Advice consortium partners** |  |

**Case study** Toynbee Hall

Client is 31-year -old female of Bangladeshi origin, divorced, unemployed with long term mental health condition and lives in a Hostel with no dependent family. Client presented us with a debt of £2,900 which was made of money owed to utility companies and rent arrears from previous accommodation which she doesn’t know how she accrued. The client also feels suicidal because of the rejection from her ex-husband after 16 years of marriage. We advised and assisted our client to negotiate payment arrangement plans with her debtors and helped her to contest some debts to be written off. The client is relieved of the outcome of her case and has expressed her gratitude to Toynbee Hall for the empathy and assistance she received.

# Theme 4 – Employment and Skills

Theme 4 has three schemes supporting 9 projects.

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| Scheme A - Developing and embedding good practice in the workplace for people with disabilities, learning difficulties and physical and mental health barriers to work |  | Scheme B - Reducing barriers to employment for disadvantaged groups |  | Scheme C - Support focused on increasing access to art and cultural industries |

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| Projects adapted well due to Covid-19 and delivered revised project activity. Scheme A started in April 2020, by setting up and maintaining two networking groups consisting of people with disabilities and employers.  Projects in scheme B and C managed to secure laptops, tablets and smart phones from various places and organisations so that both their staff and participants had the tools needed to progress virtually. Some organisations focussed their energy and resources in providing front-line Covid-19 response work. | Group of people  **485 beneficiaries supported in the last 12 months** |

## Scheme A – Developing and embedding good practice in the workplace for people with disabilities, learning difficulties and physical and mental health barriers to work

The project funded under this scheme, started in April 2020, and has carried out significant work over the last 6 months. Achievements include:



‘THEN and NOW’ employment project empowers organisations to confidently recruit, employ and retain disabled staff. The project also aims to better support local disabled people into work by addressing the barriers and promoting positive change.

## Scheme B – Reducing barriers to employment for disadvantaged groups

This scheme has 4 projects who have different target groups. Two projects focus on young people while the other two on BAME women. Projects have progressed well in order to achieve set outcomes. Below are some of the annual achievements:

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**Examples of projects and achievements**

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|  | “Building my skills and gaining my qualifications shows my children if I can do it they can to. I hope to work in a school with children and help them grow and learn. I am proud of what I achieved and couldn’t have without Limehouse” Project’. August 2020 |

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| **[log Society Links](https://www.societylinks.org.uk/)**  **SocietyLinks** |  | * 84 individuals accessed the job club * 75 people supported to develop their CV * 43 individuals supported in setting up email systems or in learning how to navigate their email * 17 individuals gained accredited outcomes |

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## Scheme C – Support focused on increasing access to art and cultural industries

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| This scheme aims to increase numbers of people participating in arts activities and schemes that lead to training and employment in the creative sectors.  Projects in this scheme started off well setting up a series of workshops, exhibitions and events to encourage participants to fully access the opportunities available in the arts and cultural industries.  In March, projects quickly adapted to remote ways of working in order to maintain the interests, motivation and participation of their beneficiaries. |  |

**Project examples and achievements:**

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| Auto Italia |  | 73 young Tower Hamlets residents from Black and Minority Ethnic and working-class backgrounds participated in art and cultural projects |

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| [Logo, Magic Me](https://magicme.co.uk/)  Artworks | The first trainee's experience was interrupted by covid 19; she has not completed her traineeship yet. The picture to the right links to the work she has completed. She filmed and edited this herself”. |  |

# Theme 5 – Community Safety

Theme 5 has three schemes supporting six projects.

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| Scheme A - Reduction in the exploitation of children, young people and other vulnerable groups |  | Scheme B - Improving the perception of young people in the community |  | Scheme C - Services for people affected by domestic violence or other unsafe circumstances |

Resilience and a willingness to find new ways of working during the lockdown was demonstrated by organisations funded under Theme 5. Implementing strategies and actions to guarantee continued engagement whilst at the same time responding to needs demonstrated by participants. Flexibility was in place of when planned project activities happened, resulting in those that could be delivered without face to face being brought forward in project timelines. Organisations used project time and additional hours to provide Covid-19 support to residents as well as responding to the widening inequalities experienced by participants.

When allowed projects returned to a mix of safe face to face work alongside online activities developed during the lockdown. Organisations have put in place project plans with flexible delivery to enable participants to continue to benefit as Covid restrictions change over the coming months.

## Scheme A – Reduction in the exploitation of children, young people and other vulnerable groups

This schemes priority is to reduce the exploitation of children and young people, and vulnerable groups and to increase the extent to which young feel safe and reduce the number of children and young people, and vulnerable groups being exploited.

There are four intended outcomes as outlined below:

**Scheme highlights October 2019 to 2020 include**

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| [Streets of Growth logo](http://www.streetsofgrowth.org/) | The Resilient Young Leaders Programme is an initiative led by and for young people (15-19 years) enabling young people to build skills and capacity to feel safe, confident, and responsible in making positive changes they want to see in their neighbourhoods and society. |

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| Participant won the Youth Champion Award for making a positive contribution to his neighbourhood and also in respect of the positive changes he made in his life. | Picture of participant receiving award |

“You made our wishes come true… you stuck by us and believed in my brother from day one… I am thankful from the bottom of my heart” – Participants sister.

|  |  |
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| [Osmani Trust Logo and link to organisations website](http://www.osmanitrust.org/) | The Schools and Community Resilience Programme achievements included:   * Series of one-off workshops on Knife crime awareness, Grooming and Exploitation engaging 177 young people * Seamless continuation of provision by rapidly moving face-to-face mentoring sessions to virtual and phone meetings * 12 peer workers delivering on street activities |

“He was able to find encouragement and motivation to get out of his comfort zone and benefit others and at the same time develop himself with new skills and experiences” project worker.

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| [Kazzam Arts Logo](https://www.kazzum.org/) | The Build project uses arts to develop relationships, emotional literacy and communication skills of young people excluded from mainstream education. |

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| A collection of short animations created to support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people. Each animation explores one of four broad themes: Mindfulness, Relationships, Movement and Relaxation. | [Grounded logo and link to organisations website](https://vimeo.com/418433919) |

“I felt listened to by the adults because they take in all the ideas that we come up with. It’s important to have space and talk. The sessions have been good for my confidence, I feel better.” — Participant

## Scheme B – Improving the perception of young people in the community

This scheme supports relationships with others in the community by breaking down barriers and supporting positive relationships between people of different generations. There are three intended outcomes for this scheme:

**Scheme Highlights October 2019 to 2020**

“The intergenerational aspect made it interesting, bringing together older people like me who recall when we only had the use of analogue cameras, together with those who see this film as an exotic new way to express creativity. The course provided me with a useful project perspective for resurrecting my analogue practice; and specifically, after lockdown, it gave me a very welcome excuse to rope in my three adult children as black-and-white photography models!” - Participant.

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| [Leaders in Community Logo and link to organisations website](https://www.licprojects.org/)  Photo of project meeting at Poplar Union showing young women talking with two older women. | “On 28/01/2020 the larger co-design session took place, where the planning for the April event was carried out. 14 older people and 6 young people met at Poplar Union, where older participants usually have a dancing class. From session, the ideas that had the most support surprised young people: Quiz night, line dancing workshop (the adults teach the young people one of their routines), storytelling workshop, tai chi class, and yoga”. Project worker. |

## Scheme C – Services for people affected by domestic violence or other unsafe circumstances

The priority of this scheme is services for people affected by domestic violence**.** It aims to increase the extent to which young people and families, affected by domestic violence and sexual abuse**, feel safe.**

**Scheme highlights October 2019 to 2020**

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| Need a safe space poster telling people they can access a safe space in Boots Pharmacy | Greater needs emerged during COVID-19 and the organisation adapted as necessary to continue delivering the project in the most appropriate form. Survivor ambassadors helped shape the Safe Spaces project during a survivor feedback forum. |
| As outreach and awareness raising components of this project were unable to run as planned during lockdown and covid related restrictions on events, the project rapidly pivoted to raising awareness and increasing available support across Tower Hamlets | Support available poster letting people know that they can access safe space reporting on the post office website. |

[](https://www.hestia.org/tower-hamlets)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Image of Bright Sky phone app | Bright Sky is a free to download mobile app providing support and information for anyone who may be in an abusive relationship or for those concerned about someone they know. Bright Sky can also be used by practitioners and employers to learn more and provide support. |

Key sessions with the project worker addressed the children’s trauma in order to understand their experiences of domestic abuse and understanding the purpose of a refuge and the requirement of keeping the location safe. As a result of the support provided, an average of 89.8% of the children in the refuge agreed that they felt more safe and secure.

Below: Writing in, ‘I am Happy’ Buddy bag foundation book completed by a service user.

Photo of text with the following words

he was happy that he was in his island and finally met his friends, the end, happy ending

# Infrastructure & Capacity Building Fund

## Tower Hamlets Voluntary and Community Sector (THVCS) Infrastructure Partnership

THVCS Infrastructure Partnership brings together three Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) infrastructure support agencies to increase the range and number of Voluntary and Community Sector organisations that are well-run and resilient.

THCVS is an independent membership organisation for voluntary, community faith and social enterprise organisations in the borough of Tower Hamlets.

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|  | Providing a range of services including:   * Information and resources * Training courses, events and conferences * Strategic representation and policy work * Free advice and support |

Achievements this year include supporting Voluntary and Community Sector organisations securing resources to provide activities.

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|  | **Highlights of inward investment.**   * **16** Voluntary and Community Sector organisations supported to secure **£235,00** from external sources * **25** Voluntary and Community Sector organisations supported to secure **£379,377** funding from Public Sector Partnership programmes. |

‘Since we were forced to make our Fundraising Officer redundant in March, I have worked closely with THCVS and particularly the Development Officer. I have valued both her suggestions of new grants to pursue and her review of applications - it is always useful to discuss possible applications … comments reviewing applications almost always provide greater focus and enhanced chance of success. … excellent level of service, responding quickly to my emails. I have no doubt whatsoever that our funding success has been greatly increased due to the skills and experience of the THCVS team’.

provides a comprehensive and responsive volunteering infrastructure service to all volunteer-involving organisations in Tower Hamlets.

“I will be more consistent in how I communicate boundaries with volunteers. It was good to learn about the legal issues around volunteering also”.

Annual project achievements include:

“… the Farm now has “better induction; a more consistent and confident approach across staff to managing challenging situations with volunteers, and better understanding of why it's important to do so”.

Tower Hamlets Community Transport contributes by managing a fleet of accessible minibuses for hire by member Voluntary and Community organisations. This resource enables vulnerable residents to access a variety of services ranging from social care for the elderly to children accessing sports activities.

They also support local Voluntary and Community organisations by providing training, garage services, and through collaborating on community projects.

MiDAS (Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme) training ensures drivers using a minibus can provide a safe service.

THCVS and VCTH have maintained service throughout the period by moving to online working, with minimum disruption to access. Both organisations have also responded by taking on additional work, some of which is funded by LBTH e.g. the Volunteer Hub. And some of which has been absorbed within existing resources, for example, involvement in about 10 different borough wide Covid-19 response planning meetings. THCT was unable to operate during the Covid pandemic and services were suspended. They have put measures in place to mitigate risk, monitor changes and react accordingly. They are slowly getting back on the road.

# Appendix 1 – Geographical data

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| **4,389** in the **NW cluster**  (Bethnal Green, Spitalfields & Banglatown, St Peter’s, Weavers) | **5,608** in the **NE cluster**  (Bow East / West, Bromley North / South, Mile End) | **6,087** in the **SW cluster**  (Shadwell, St Dunstan’s, St Katharine & Wapping, Whitechapel) | **4,461** in the **SE cluster**  (Blackwall & Cubitt Town, Canary Wharf, Island Gardens, Lansbury, Poplar) |

# Appendix 2 – Equalities data